



WISCONSIN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AMENDMENT MEMO

2001 Assembly Bill 383

**Assembly
Amendment 1**

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2001 ASSEMBLY BILL 383

Wisconsin Educational Services Program for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Assembly Bill 383 changes the name of the Wisconsin School for the Deaf to the Wisconsin Educational Services Program for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (WESPDHH). It then specifies the duties of WESPDHH and makes other changes which, in general, parallel the changes made with respect to the Wisconsin School for the Visually Handicapped when it was renamed the Wisconsin Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired (WCBVI) by 1999 Wisconsin Act 9. [See generally, Legislative Council Staff Information Memorandum 99-10, *Wisconsin Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired (1999 Wisconsin Act 9)* (December 28, 1999).^{*}] Similar to the role of WCBVI with respect to children who are blind or visually impaired, the renamed WESPDHH would be responsible for operating a school and providing other statewide services for children who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Audit

The bill requires the Legislative Audit Bureau (LAB) to perform a performance audit of WESPDHH in the 2004-05 fiscal year and submit a report to the Legislature by June 30, 2005.

^{*} This is available at: http://www.legis.state.wi.us/lc/jlc99/im99_10.

Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Education Council

The bill creates a Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Education Council (Council) in the Department of Public Instruction (DPI). The bill then specifies that the 12 members are to be appointed by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction (State Superintendent) from various categories specified in the bill and are to serve for three-year terms. Notwithstanding the provision for three-year terms, the bill phases in the terms with: one-third of the initial members' terms expiring on July 1, 2002; one-third expiring on July 1, 2003; and the remaining one-third expiring on July 1, 2004. Thus, after the initial terms, one-third of the membership of the Council will be up for appointment every year.

ASSEMBLY AMENDMENT 1 TO 2001 ASSEMBLY BILL 383

Assembly Amendment 1 to Assembly Bill 383 does the following:

Audit

The amendment *delays for one year* the required LAB performance evaluation audit of WESPDHH. Thus, the audit would be required in the 2005-06 fiscal year, with the report to the Legislature due by June 30, 2006.

Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Education Council

The amendment *specifies the duties of the Council*. The Council is required to do all of the following:

1. Meet at least twice each year.
2. Advise the State Superintendent on statewide services, activities, programs, investigations, and research as in the Council's judgment will benefit pupils who are hearing impaired.
3. Make recommendations for improving services provided by WESPDHH.
4. Review the level and quality of services available to pupils in the state who are hearing impaired and make recommendations about those services.
5. Propose to the State Superintendent ways to improve the preparation of teachers and other staff who provide services to pupils who are hearing impaired.
6. Propose to the State Superintendent ways to improve coordination between DPI and other agencies in providing services to persons who are hearing impaired.

In addition, the amendment provides that the Council may initiate consultations with DPI and that the Council has access to public files, public records, and statistics kept by DPI that relate to matters concerning children who are hearing impaired.

Under the amendment, the State Superintendent must seek the advice of and consult with the Council on issues related to persons who are hearing impaired. The amendment also specifies that the

State Superintendent and the director of WESPDHH, or their designees, must attend meetings of the Council.

Finally, the amendment extends by one year the terms of the initial appointees to the Council. Thus, one-third of the initial appointees would have their terms expire on July 1, 2003; one-third would have their initial terms expire on July 1, 2004; and the remaining one-third would have their initial terms expire on July 1, 2005.

2001 Assembly Bill 383 was introduced by Representative Olsen and others; cosponsored by Senator Grobschmidt and others. It was referred to the Assembly Committee on Education which held a hearing on the bill on November 13, 2001. Representative Olsen subsequently offered Assembly Amendment 1.

The Assembly Committee on Education adopted Assembly Amendment 1 on a vote of Ayes, 14; Noes, 0, and recommended passage of the bill, as amended, on a vote of Ayes, 14; Noes, 0.

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